



March 23, 2021

## Support HB 133 to Provide Medicaid Coverage to New Mothers for 12 Months Post-Partum

The Texas Association of Community Health Centers (TACHC) appreciates the opportunity to comment in favor of HB 133 by Representative Rose. These comments represent the perspective of the 73 federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) in Texas which provide high-quality, affordable, primary and preventive health care services to people who otherwise may lack access to medical care due to where they live, lack of insurance, language barriers, income level, or their complex health care needs. In 2019, health centers delivered services to more than 400,000 women of childbearing age in almost 600 clinic locations across 133 rural and urban counties.

In 2019, Texas health centers served 60,000 infants under age 1, however many of their moms were uninsured or had limited health care coverage. TACHC supports efforts to expand coverage for new mothers for 12 months post-partum to ensure continuity of care during the critical first year after childbirth. Outside the current public health emergency that has temporarily extended coverage, Texas Medicaid coverage for new mothers ends just 60 days post-partum. Research shows that many medical issues and complications arise several months after pregnancy, leading to long-term health issues for mothers and babies, expensive hospital stays, and higher costs to Medicaid and the state. House Bill 133 would implement the top recommendation of Texas' Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee and promote health for mothers and babies during the critical first year of a baby's life.

While Healthy Texas Women Plus is an important program aimed at improving health care outcomes for moms between pregnancies, many women still have limited access to comprehensive services to address chronic disease, post-partum depression, and substance use disorder. Many times, women will seek primary or preventive care at health centers covered under Healthy Texas Women, only to face challenges with navigating access to needed specialty care and treatment.

HB 133 would promote health for mothers and babies during the critical first year of a baby's life and is a great step forward to reducing maternal morbidity and mortality in Texas. We urge the committee to vote favorably for HB 133.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 133. Please don't hesitate to contact Shelby Tracy ([stracy@tachc.org](mailto:stracy@tachc.org)) with any questions about these comments.

Sincerely,

Jana Eubank  
Executive Director, TACHC  
Texas Association of Community Health Centers